



CLOSING THE BOOK ON FESTIVAL SEASON...

Dubbed TomorrowWorld, the debut US version of Belgium's TomorrowLand followed its storied European counterpart by filling the pages of its weekend-long book with top-notch production and fairytale vibes.

It's a simple concept: an open book, an unwritten story. A hundred and forty thousand people, 300 artists, 75 countries and one tale to tell.

Chattahoochee Hills plays host to an international gathering 30 miles outside of Atlanta to partake in history in the making. With a welcoming kickoff on Thursday, the fantastical weekend begins as campers trickle into DreamVille, the festival's official campgrounds. Their home-away-from-home, the grounds serve as a makeshift city conjuring up a population of 25,000, all bearing a flag of their own.

The journey to DreamVille isn't easy for campers, who are greeted with a two-mile trek upon entering the grounds. The hike may be arduous, but the payoff is clear and immediate. Walking down a wooden path that stretches the entirety of the grounds, a row of welcoming faces greets campers with words of encouragement and the first of many high-fives. Tents pop up alongside intricate totems, personalized markings of a community in the making. Balloons with the word "Love" distinguish each section of the grounds in a vibrant color-coded manner, equally dispersed among information booths, help points and a marketplace complete with festival essentials. One look around the land is all it takes to feel the vibes; a sense of community is apparent from the get-go, uniting strangers under the bond of a Utopian journey, which is already unfolding. And this is just the campground.



Most in attendance carry vivid memories – even if they're from a live stream – of the Book of Wisdom setup, brought from Belgium to host the weekend's main stage. Beyond that there is far more to these festival lands, so many twists and turns and settings to explore. Expectations and comparisons to the Belgian big brother event induce excited speculations and chatter. However, all the TomorrowWorld attendees will soon make their own discoveries, follow their own paths and create their own memories.

A long walk across a low bridge soon sheds light on the first inklings of a magical land. Fire-breathing fish and majestically constructed lampposts line the way while patrons appear to walk on water towards the TomorrowWorld gates. "Yesterday is history, today is a gift, tomorrow is mystery," read the festival's two entrance archways, a mantra with which all in attendance will eventually relate.

Once over the pedestrian bridge, the first stage reveals itself as an overgrown forest palace. Emanating a sense of Indian religious royalty and fully equipped with Buddhist trappings, the 'It's A Trap!' stage appropriately earns itself the nickname the "Trap Mahal" for the duration of the first Friday. The twisted offspring of Atlanta's favorite dubstep-sons are hosted here, paying homage to the festival's native city on its inaugural day. Two Fresh and Bro Safari help to kick things off for the bass-inclined, filling the forest with thumping lows, a well-received welcome for the day's early warriors.

Venturing further into the forest, folks discover a fantastic waterfront stage. 'The Deep End' is docked for fans that like to dive in the deep end of house music, with Welsh legend Jamie Jones heading the ledger for its Friday opening. The festival producers ensure each stage assumes a character of its own on each individual day, seeing an overnight transformation in both style and music. The Deep End doubles as a clubhouse for A-Trak and Nick Catchdubs' Fool's Gold party on Saturday, hosting a cultured lineup curated by Alain Macklovitch [A-Trak]. The label boss caps off the night with a headlining slot, but the entire Fool's Gold camp brings their style to the stage all day, with memorable performances from the likes of Araabmuzik, RL Grime, Fake Blood and Style of Eye.

The grounds are exhaustingly expansive, yet the cinematic layout makes each trek from stage to stage a fairytale journey. After another long slog over a second footbridge, the main grounds appear through a clearing where sprawling acres of land hold a plethora of unique stages. Situated at the base of a hill, a towering structure serves as one of the most impressive large-scale set-ups at TomorrowWorld. Loaded with retractable claws, the Q-Dance stage's super-sized scorpion is a towering ode to the harder styles of electronic music. This is where the most promising hard-hitters spin gargantuan beats that match the stage, with MC Villain playing host. Under the structure's massive claws, Audiofreq, Ran-D, and Headhunterz throw down impressive hardstyle madness. The combination of frenetic music with supremely elaborate settings leave the crowd breathlessly satiated.





A short walk away, a stage that hosts the Trance Family for much of the weekend is less lavish than its counterparts, but every bit as loud. Situated on the sprawling grounds adjacent to the main stage, its moat-lined castle setup gives a shrouded seclusion to the dance floor in its court. A mini-amphitheater hosts many of trance music's finest, most notably launching the weekend with Ferry Corsten as its guide. Ferry's 'Full On' stage brings back-to-back magic as the Dutch heavyweight takes to the decks beside each of his guests. Aly & Fila, Cosmic Gate, Sied Van Riel and other trance mainstays feed off the organic course of the performances with Ferry as their ringleader. Weaving in and out of sets as naturally as the day flows, Ferry caps off the night with his own headlining slot, proving why the Dutch overlord has amassed a very loyal following of adoring fans - around the grounds, and around the globe.

The main stage is an icon in its own right, a colossal structure that has been perfectly packaged to travel from its native Boom, in Belgium, to bring a taste of the festival's roots to its American debut. With a fully functioning book that opens and closes, the display is laden with mythical figures and inviting phrases. This towering structure serves as a metaphor for the entire experience - an open book to fill with the story of the weekend.

Such a wealth of talent in one place reflects the scope of a tale that has only just begun. Between two covers, dance music's heavyweights close out a season that has been so vital in our scene. Two former Swedish House Mafia members, Axwell and Sebastian Ingrosso, show the world the continuing upward trajectory of their individual careers since their final show in March; Tiësto floors the crowd with his recent trance revival and newfound trap antics; Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike close house, as the festival's favorite Belgians, their official anthem "Ocarina" ringing around the grounds; and an unsurprisingly yet legendary performance by trance king Armin van Buuren wraps TomorrowWorld under a sky of blinding pyrotechnics. For as intricately designed as the stage is, so too is each DJ's set passionately crafted. And as the book closes on the final e

vening, all in attendance are left elated and relishing why they fell in love with it all in the first place.

TomorrowWorld is a dance music tour de force. Every step brings discovery, while the incredible attention to detail sets tones and colors perspectives. The seamless way designs weave into the grounds is surreal, yet natural. It keeps the inherent rural feel of the area, but adds the hallmarks of its own distinctly developed society. The people who fill the place have an appreciation for their role in this world. Whether it is the 21+ restrictions, the increased security from recent events, or a common compass that led them here, everyone seems maturely measured. Hills and forest shade blanket almost every stage where people find their place. Dancers can twerk their bodies into oblivion while keeping a clear head. DreamVille is a village of twenty-five thousand happy idiots; they aren't lost souls, but many have to wonder where in the world we are? Perhaps the expansive nature of the lands leads to a misinformed staff, and perhaps the camping setup leaves room for improvement, but every new venture goes through growing pains. Clearly the authors of this book have an idea of where the story is going. Every beat, every step, every smile is a stroke of calculated genius, and a scene that is sure to grace the hills of Chattahoochee for many years to come.

Write it in the books, festival season 2013 has closed its final chapter. The prologue began along the sandy shores of Miami where a trio retired telling the youth, "Don't You Worry Child," and ended here, upon a hill across a blue lake. The Book of Wisdom has shut and winter is coming, but the pages keep turning. **KASSY RUIMY**



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